



# Courthill Newsletter

December 2025

## Headteacher's Message

**Mrs Carter, Headteacher**

As we approach the end of the excitement—and sometimes wonderful chaos—of Christmas week at Courthill, I wanted to take a moment to celebrate what has truly been a magical autumn term here. Most recently, we have had mischievous visits from the elves, a very special appearance from the Man in Red all the way from the North Pole, a beautiful evening celebrating light with our Reception families, and a fantastic Fair. Across the school, the children have delighted their families and school staff with their singing of Christmas songs, and all children got to enjoy a festive trip to the theatre (kindly paid for by the PTA). I was lucky to join the Year 2 children for their trip to see *Little Robin Red Vest* – the looks of wonder and awe on their faces were unforgettable and a joy to share.

Huge thanks to all our children across the school for the way they consistently demonstrate our school values both in and outside of school. Every day, they show that they are respectful, safe and ready to contribute to our school community. It is always a pleasure to welcome visitors into Courthill and for them to notice the character, responsibility and kindness our pupils show so naturally.

Having settled beautifully into school life, our Reception children have already become fantastic role models, particularly for the many families who visited us this term as they prepare to apply for places for 2026. Yes, those preparations are already well underway in the background! We are so proud of how confidently and joyfully our youngest learners have begun their school journey.

Across the school, I have been genuinely wowed by the quality of handwriting and writing in general. The children are embracing our new Kinetic Letters approach, and as always, they absolutely love a challenge.

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the entire Courthill team—our teachers, admin team, lunchtime staff, school governors and volunteers—who work so incredibly hard to ensure that we have enjoyed such a positive and successful term. A very special thank you must also go to our brand-new PTA committee, who organised a hugely successful Christmas Fair. It was wonderful to welcome past families back into school, and the event raised an impressive amount of money. The PTA have already enquired about how they can invest those funds directly into enriching the experiences of the children currently with us, which is exactly what makes Courthill so special.

Sadly, we have to say goodbyes and huge thanks to two members of staff who are leaving us: Amy McNama who has been part of our teaching team; and Sarah Yeadon one of our lunchtime supervisors. They will be missed and we wish them well with their new ventures and hope they keep in touch.

Before I sign-off, a special thank you to everyone who completed the recent parent survey. Your positive and constructive feedback has been incredibly valuable, and I will be writing to you in the New Year with further updates based on what you have shared. Now, all that's left for me to do is to wish you a very happy and precious Christmas with your loved ones. I hope you enjoy magical moments together, and I look forward to welcoming you all back on **Tuesday 6th January 2026**.

## **Governors' Letter**

### **Astra Monahan, Co-opted Governor, on behalf of the Governing Body**

Amongst the Odd Socks Day back in November to promote Anti-Bullying week, PTA movie nights, theatre trips and the fabulously well-attended Christmas Fair; Courthill has offered Phonics visits, handwriting workshops and Stay and Play opportunities to families across the year groups this half term. Hopefully you have managed a visit into school and seen it in all its glory!

Governors have visited several times over the last few weeks too including Suzanne Jeffries, our link governor for Curriculum, who was invited to attend an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) meeting hosted by the senior leadership team at Courthill along with EYFS specialist Naomi Shrimpton, from our trust, Coastal Learning Partnership.

Staff worked highly collaboratively to plan and develop an aspirational curriculum for our Reception year children as they head into the new year. Suzanne reported that staff have an in-depth understanding of their pupil demographic within EYFS, and can already identify where to place their focus to bring maximum benefit for pupils at this stage of their school journey.

This term we welcome two further volunteer governors to our school. After the parent governor election, Ashley Fraser was appointed. However shortly after, Helen Clarke resigned so we have also been able to appoint Niall Adamson. We look forward to working with Ashley and Niall and benefiting from their experience and commitment to supporting our school community. Thank you to everyone who participated in the nomination and election process.

So as we reach the final doors of our advent calendars, I hope you will join me in celebrating the hard work and long days behind us and look forward to a joyful and peaceful festive break.

## **Year Updates**

### **Year Reception**

This half term, Reception have been exploring celebrations from different cultures, including birthdays, weddings, Diwali and Hanukkah. We are now learning about Christmas, and the children have loved this topic! Their curiosity and enthusiasm have shone through as they discovered stories and customs from around the world.

To mark the end of our 'Let's Celebrate' topic, we invited families back into school for a torchlight treasure hunt. The children were thrilled to find all the hidden letters and collect their prizes! Another highlight of the evening was sharing a snack in the hall with family and friends. Thank you to everyone who joined us – we raised over £200, which will go towards new resources for the children.

In this final week, there has been plenty of fun and laughter in the Reception base, thanks to our cheeky elves! They have been up to all sorts of mischief, from hiding in the Christmas trees to turning over all the classroom chairs!

Another special moment was the children's first Christmas singing performance at Courthill. We were so proud of them – they sang beautifully and worked hard to remember all the actions and words. Thank you to everyone who joined us for our festive *Stay and Play*. The children loved taking part in the Christmas and winter-themed activities. We hope you have a lovely, relaxing Christmas break, and we look forward to welcoming you back in 2026 as we begin our exciting new topic, 'Once Upon a Time'.

## **Year One**

Our 'Horrible Hospitals (from the past)' topic was a huge success with the children! They showed great interest learning about the unpleasant hospital conditions of the past and how Florence Nightingale's changes made hospitals better for everyone. We had many enthusiastic doctors and nurses in the role-play area and the topic was a brilliant stimulus for the children's writing. We also explored another inspirational nurse called Kofoworola Abeni Pratt – the first black nurse in the NHS – who did inspirational work in the UK and Nigeria.

Thank you to the parents who kindly came in to share their knowledge and expertise with the children. Having medical professionals in school really helped the children understand how far we have come with healthcare in our country today.

In science, the children enjoyed learning about the human body and our different senses. A firm favourite experiment was when the children had to use their sense of smell to guess the food in the mystery container. In music, the children enjoyed exploring the pulse and rhythm of different winter-themed songs in preparation for our Christmas performance. And what a performance it was! We are so proud of our Year 1 children for performing so confidently!

As this half term draws to a close, the children have continued to blow us away with their learning and their independence. Many thanks for your continued support. Excitement levels are understandably high among the children (and staff!) – we wish you all a very happy, healthy Christmas.

## **Year Two**

It has been another fantastic half term! The children absolutely loved exploring our topic '*Across the Blue and Beyond*'. They have been fascinated by the first moon landing and its impact on technology today, and enjoyed learning about the incredible mission led by Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins.

Our journey didn't stop there! The children also discovered Christopher Columbus and his influence on the world, and they compared him to fellow explorer Neil Armstrong. Their curiosity and enthusiasm have shone through every lesson.

The children's writing this half term has blown us away. There has been amazing progress in handwriting and the children are really enjoying learning through the 'Kinetic Letters' programme. Alongside this, we have focused on sentence structure, encouraging children to add detail through description, including expanded noun phrases.

In maths, the children have continued building on their skills in addition and subtraction, working with larger numbers using a place value chart (look out for a parent guide on this next half term!). More recently, they have explored 2D and 3D shapes, something we will revisit in future months.

The festive season has brought so much excitement! During our trip to the Lighthouse to see *Little Robin Red Vest*, the children were an incredibly respectful audience and thoroughly enjoyed the performance. And what a treat their singing was this week! They worked so hard to learn their own poems and songs, especially our very special Courthill version of 'The 12 Days of Christmas'! We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did.

Thank you for your continued support this half term. We wish you a wonderful break with family and friends, and we look forward to welcoming you back in January for our new topic: '*Poles Apart*'.

## PTA update

### Thea Downey, on behalf of the PTA

I can't quite believe we are already at the end of the Autumn term – the weeks seem to have flown by. Christmas is nearly upon us, and I'm sure everyone is looking forward to a couple of weeks of rest and relaxation (!) after a long and busy term.

The PTA would like to thank you all for your support, enthusiasm and generosity this term. Our events simply couldn't run without it. This term included two Cakey Fridays, three movie nights, a uniform sale, a bingo night, Christmas cards, the Christmas raffle and, of course, the Christmas Fair. A huge thank you to everyone who braved the torrential rain and strong winds to come out and support the Christmas Fair. Your determination and community spirit truly made the event special. It was wonderful to see the children having so much fun playing the game stalls, their laughter and excitement proving that a little rain certainly cannot dampen their enjoyment. Santa's Grotto and the Winter Wonderland were a fantastic success, bringing plenty of festive cheer and magical moments for the children. It was also especially lovely to welcome back former pupils and parents who returned to support the school. Seeing familiar faces and that continued sense of community reminded us just how special our school family is.

Looking ahead to the new year, we have a number of events planned, including our fabulous **Quiz Night (Friday 30th January, adults only!)**. Tickets will go on sale in the first week of next term, so gather some friends together and join us for a great evening. We are hoping to confirm another family-friendly event next term – so watch this space! In addition, we will have movie nights (for all year groups), Cakey Fridays and the Love and Kindness Disco for Year 1 and 2.

I would like to express my personal thanks to the new committee members who have joined since September and have truly hit the ground running. At the end of last year, we said goodbye to most of the existing committee, and I'll admit I felt somewhat overwhelmed at taking over – but we did it!

The image opposite shows how the money you helped to raise has been spent on so far. We have a meeting planned early next term to discuss what else we can help fund for the school. If you would like to get involved with any of our activities, please email us at [courhillpta@gmail.com](mailto:courhillpta@gmail.com). Any contributions, big or small, are always gratefully received.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



## Other Updates

### **Well-being message, from Mrs Churchill**

As winter settles in, nature reminds us to slow down and recharge. The upcoming holiday can bring joy and connection, but for some, the season may feel heavy. If you are finding things difficult, please know you are not alone. Simple acts like a chat or a walk can make a big difference. Let's take inspiration from nature and give ourselves permission to rest and lean on each other.

- **Embrace light and movement:** Take a short walk outdoors or sit by a sunny window.
- **Stay connected:** Arrange a coffee with a friend or send a message to someone you have not spoken to in a while.
- **Create small joys:** Enjoy a good book, a warm drink, or festive music.
- **Reach out if you need support:** Please connect if you need to. There is lots of useful advice about parenting and mental health on this link: [Parenting and mental health](#)

## Community Updates

### **Support for families**

- **Early Help & Targeted Intervention Service.** Early Help Access Point Public 01202 126 668 [EHAcessPoint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:EHAcessPoint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk)
- **BCP Food Map:** [Food Map](#) The Access to Food map shows all the different types of community food support available in our area, and how you can access them.
- Our website lists other organisations that support families: [click here to find out more.](#)

### **Important dates**

Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> December	School closes at 1pm for Christmas holiday
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> December – Fri 2 <sup>nd</sup> Jan	Christmas holiday – SCHOOL CLOSED
Mon 5 <sup>th</sup> January	INSET DAY – SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS
Tue 6 <sup>th</sup> January	School starts for Spring term
Fri 13 <sup>th</sup> February	INSET day (school closed to pupils)
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> February	HALF TERM